

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Eastern District of Wisconsin

United States of America

v.

JARRIEL D. COTTON
(DOB: XX/XX/1984)

Case No. 25-904M(NJ)

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of 05/13/2025 in the county of Milwaukee in the
Eastern District of Wisconsin, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

18 USC 844(i)

Offense Description

Arson of building used in interstate commerce

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

Please see Affidavit.

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.



Complainant's signature

Chad Vartanian, Detective - MPD

Printed name and title

Sworn via telephone; transmitted via email
pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. 4.1

Date: 5/15/2025

City and state: Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Judge's signature

Honorable Nancy Joseph, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, Chad Vartanian, being duly sworn, hereby dispose and state as follows:

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. I am a Detective with the Milwaukee Police Department and have been since March of 2014. I have been employed with the Milwaukee Police Department as a certified law enforcement officer since October of 2006. I have been assigned to various work locations such as District 5 patrol, District 5 Anti-Gang Unit, Milwaukee Police Homicide Division, High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), I was assigned to the FBI and was a Deputized Task Force Officer, working on the Southeastern Regional Gang/Narcotics Task Force and have been a Deputized Task Force Officer with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and currently assigned to the Milwaukee Police Department's Major Crimes Division. I have investigated violations of Federal law, directed drug and street gang investigations, homicide investigation, robbery investigations and obtained and executed search and arrest warrants related to various crimes.

2. This affidavit is submitted for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause to believe that on or about May 13, 2025, in the State and Eastern District of Wisconsin, JARRIEL COTTON (DOB: XX/XX/1984) committed a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 844(i) (arson of a building used in interstate commerce).

PROBABLE CAUSE

3. On Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at approximately 6:11 AM, an unknown male subject entered into the front doors of the building located at 700 W. State Street, Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC). This subject is observed on video surveillance to be walking around inside of the building. The subject eventually walks up the stairs to the third floor. This subject is

observed to walk into a common seating area for students at approximately 6:43 AM and use a lighter to ignite a cloth and wood structured chair and then walk away. Video surveillance shows the chair become fully engulfed in flames, with heights reaching approximately 6 to 10 feet high.

4. As the fire reaches its peak, G.S., the Senior Electronics Specialist for MATC, is working in a secure room down the hall from the fire and observed the fire alarm zone for the second and third floor activate. G.S. also observed the sprinkler system for both floors and zones activate. G.S. left the room and observed the fire. G.S. retrieved a fire extinguisher and attempted to control the flames. This is recorded by video surveillance.

5. Video showed the subject who set the fire exit the building from the same main front entry and exit door. He crossed W. State Street, headed south, and then walked west on W. State Street, eventually out of view of video cameras.

6. While investigating this incident, video surveillance obtained through MATC staff showed this unknown subject to be a black male, approximately 5'10 to 6' tall, with a stocky build, low cut hair, wearing dark colored sweatpants, a dark colored jacket with a brown hooded sweatshirt underneath and a dark colored backpack with a green stripe. His face is fully visible in the video. Looking at still photographs from surveillance video, specifically a left profile still, a facial tattoo can be observed on the left side of the subject's face.

7. During the course of this investigation, Milwaukee Police Officer's Timothy Krejci and Parker Popp, from District 1, conducted a neighborhood canvass, using a still photograph taken from surveillance video, provided by MATC. They spoke with a clerk at the In and Out Smoke Shop, located at 701 W. Wisconsin Avenue, who recognized the subject in the photo, but did not know his name. However, the clerk had knowledge of the subject in the photo, being arrested by the Marquette University Police Department, for a previous and unrelated alleged

Sexual Assault. Police Officer's Krejci and Popp spoke with Detective Billy Ball of the Marquette Police Department and showed him the still photograph. Detective Ball positively identified the subject in the photo as Jarriel Cotton (B/M XX/XX/1984). Detective Ball provided information to officers that Cotton is known to frequent a food bank at 1335 W. Vliet Street, Repairers of the Breach. Officer's Krejci and Popp then went to Repairers of the Breach and spoke with A.H., a volunteer. A.H. observed the still photograph and identified the subject as Jarriel Cotton, but did not know his birthdate.

8. As the above information was being learned, I (Detective Vartanian), provided Detective Michael Martin of the Milwaukee Police Department with a still photograph of this subject and Detective Martin contacted Detective Jacob Castillo of the Kenosha Police Department and requested the use of facial recognition. Detective Castillo reported to Detective Martin that he had a 93.4% match for Jarriel Cotton (B/M XX/XX/1984).

9. On Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at approximately 4:30 pm, Jarriel Cotton returned to the campus of MATC at 700 W. State Street and was observed by MATC security. He was detained until Milwaukee Police arrived on scene and took Cotton into custody.

10. I spoke with B.C. of ServPro Fire Restoration Services, who examined the fire scene and provided an estimate of damages, at the request of MATC. B.C. estimated that the cost to repair and clean the damages from the fire scene at between \$150,000 - \$200,000.

11. On Wednesday, May 14, 2025, I (Detective Vartanian) attempted to conduct an in custody and *Mirandized* interview of Jarriel Cotton (B/M XX/XX/1984). Cotton stated he did not want to make a statement.

12. MATC is a public two-year vocational-technical and community college based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. MATC offers day, evening, weekend, and online classes. The student

body of MATC is composed of both in-state and out-of-state students. The downtown Milwaukee campus is a building used in interstate commerce.

CONCLUSION

13. Based on the information above, I submit that there is probable cause to believe that JARRIEL COTTON has violated 18 U.S.C. § 844(i) (arson of a building used in interstate commerce).